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THE INVITATIONAL: ARTISTS OF NORTHEAST OHIO February 27 - April 21, 1991

Fifteen Northeast Ohio artists, working in a variety of media, will show selections of their latest work in an invitational exhibition on view at The Cleveland Museum of Art from February 27 through April 21, 1991. The exhibition takes the place of the Museum's traditional May Show, an annual juried exhibition of works by artists of Ohio's thirteen-county Western Reserve, first held in 1919.

As Museum director Evan H. Turner explains in the introduction to the catalogue for this exhibition, stressing the Museum's long-standing commitment to local artists, "Many artists have repeatedly suggested an exhibition of their work in somewhat greater depth than the one or two works that the May Show's rules traditionally permit. Because the Museum this year launches the celebration of its 75th anniversary, we felt that it might be an ideal moment to attempt a new format, at least for one year."

The Invitational celebrates the works of artists who live and work in the Western Reserve, in contrast to the May Show, which is open also to artists who were born in the area but have moved away. Tom E. Hinson, the Museum's curator of contemporary art and coordinator of the May Show since 1973, selected the artists in The Invitational. After consulting with professional colleagues about artists who might be invited to participate, Hinson asked more than 150 artists to send him slides of their latest works and visited the studios of 80 of them. "The vitality and size of the region's visual arts community provided a remarkable range of work which, of course, made the choices very

difficult," he says. "Since we wanted to show a number of works by each artist, preference was given to those with a uniform, considerable body of work. Another key concern was to feature an artist's current work, preferably works not shown before in Cleveland."

The Invitational has provided an opportunity to consider works excluded from previous May Shows due to their size, the limitations of the Museum's facilities, or other restrictions. Thus the 1991 show includes films and an installation that transforms all of the Museum's Gallery 240, along with paintings, sculpture, prints, photographs, crafts, and other media normally seen in a May Show. "The artists selected cover an astonishing diversity of approaches, styles, media, and techniques, and a broad spectrum of historic, artistic, political, environmental, and social concerns," says Hinson. "All have something significant to say in their work, which makes it visually and intellectually riveting for the audience."

The artists, in alphabetical order, are: Christina DePaul, Kenneth Dingwall, Carl Floyd, Don Harvey, Masumi Hayashi, Curlee Raven Holton, Michael Loderstedt, Kirk Mangus, Richard Myers, Ken Nevadomi, Paul O'Keeffe, Patricia Zinsmeister Parker, John Pearson, Annie Peters, and La Wilson.

Metalsmith **Christina DePaul**, associate professor of art at the University of Akron, fabricates impressive, large-scale sculptural pieces from aluminum. To shape aluminum into the bowls which are the starting points for the seven works in the exhibition, she places an aluminum sheet that has been annealed--to make it malleable and strong--over a wooden form that is then spun at high speed. In *Crown of Creation*, hundreds of hair-like elements made of aluminum welding wire burst forth from the opening of a cone-shaped bowl with a crown-like rim. Nestled in this mass of wire is a small crown of handcrafted sterling silver, decorated with non-precious stones. The whole

work sits on a triangular aluminum pedestal. Early in her career DePaul became dissatisfied with the limited colors of the metals she used and experimented with anodizing, an electro-chemical process that makes an aluminum surface porous and able to be dyed; submerging anodized aluminum forms in several baths of pigment, she achieves deep luminescent hues. Since she began anodizing metal in 1981, DePaul has become a leader in the use of the process in the fine arts, giving workshops and demonstrations around the country.

Kenneth Dingwall, chairman of the painting department at the Cleveland Institute of Art and a resident of Cleveland Heights, works in the abstract tradition, exploring the evocative, emotional qualities of forms and colors. In each of the seven paintings exhibited, Dingwall's carefully placed lines organize the compositions. *At One* sets up a dialogue of stark contrasts between black horizontal bands and white verticals. Arched or bowed lines organize the canvas in five other works. The lines vary from barely discernible to large, bold strips made by a wide brush or built up through numerous, deft strokes of paint. Dingwall uses only a few skillfully balanced hues, with many subtle variations, which pulse and shimmer when touched by light.

Since 1967 Madison resident **Carl Floyd**, chairman of the sculpture department at the Cleveland Institute of Art, has proposed and fabricated large-scale, site-specific public sculpture. Invited to create a temporary installation that would fill the entire space of the Museum's Gallery 240 (approximately 58 x 18 feet), Floyd, long concerned with environmental issues, especially deforestation, created a "ghost" forest of free-standing trees made of white styrofoam. The trunks of the trees, two to three feet in diameter, rise six and one-half feet from the floor, before branching out into limbs holding white styrofoam birds, fish, and other animals threatened by pollution or loss of habitat, along

with styrofoam cars, planes, houses, and other thought-provoking forms that will surprise and delight visitors wandering through the installation. Ceiling lights illuminate the forms, walls, and floor, creating strong, dramatic patterns.

Don Harvey, in his studio in Cleveland's industrial Flats along the Cuyahoga River, constructs multi-media works that comment on subjects that interest him, most recently industry and its impact on the environment. In the seven constructions shown, he combines rectangular sheets of aluminum, steel, and plastic with unconventional materials like windshield wiper and antifreeze fluids, oil, vinyl tubing, and Astro Turf, chosen both for their visual qualities and to reinforce his themes. He recently began using a computerized industrial three-color jet-spray process--used in commercial sign painting--to apply photographic images to metallic and plastic surfaces. In *River and Lake*, as one example, he has used this technique to transfer to aluminum plates an image of churning waters, over which he printed the names of species of fish, and things that foul our waters--"oil slick" and "sewage overflow." Harvey, professor of art at the University of Akron, is president of Cleveland's Committee for Public Art.

Masumi Hayashi, associate professor of art at Cleveland State University, shows nine panoramic color photograph collages of city streets, architecture, and landscape. She documents her concerns about waste and pollution at industrial and military facilities in photo-collages of EPA Superfund sites (declared extremely hazardous by the Environmental Protection Agency), an abandoned Titan II missile site, and a graveyard for B-52 airplanes. To make her collages, Hayashi focuses her tripod-mounted camera on the horizon, shooting successively along a span of 240 to 360 degrees or more, then angles her camera to a new position, repeating the process until she has taken the shots necessary for a panoramic view. Her vertical range is considerably narrower, usually less

than 180 degrees, from just in front of the tripod to directly above her head. When she assembles her collages, the photographic images slightly overlap or repeat, those taken farther from the horizon showing the greatest distortion. The result is a visually complex work with a rich surface pattern, reminiscent of Cubism's fractured space.

Cleveland Heights printmaker **Curlee Raven Holton** is a skillful draftsman and designer whose bold, dramatic compositions use a variety of techniques, mainly etching and monotype, often incorporated in a single print. The ten works in this show combine recognizable imagery (usually human figures) with textured gray areas or blocks of pure color, the white of the paper balancing and organizing these elements. Like printmakers of the past, Holton often uses the medium to comment on society; in several instances he fixes on the desperation and violence of urban life, as in the etching *Shoot 'Em Up*, which includes images of a boy holding a pistol, a gray trigger-like form, a lifeless arm, and other elements, all arranged in the shape of a handgun. For the past several years, Holton has coordinated artist-in-residence programs at public schools in the Cleveland area. He currently teaches printmaking at Kent State University.

Photography, always an element in Cleveland artist **Michael Loderstedt's** work as a painter, printmaker, sculptor, and conceptual artist, is now his principal artistic activity. Using a hand-built pinhole camera that uses paper negatives, Loderstedt photographs commonplace objects in and around his home from unusual angles and perspectives and at different times of the day. He selects four to six images, shuffles them around, even turning them on their sides to find the right combination, and mounts them as a single composition. His juxtapositions are often startling, presenting a strange sense of space. Among ten works exhibited are five from a 1990 series, *Picture Completion*. Inspired by the Wechsler Adult Intelligence Scale test which requires the

person taking the test to associate words with certain subjects, Loderstedt assigned an "appropriate word" to accompany each photograph. Loderstedt currently lectures on photography at the University of Akron School of Art.

Ceramic artist **Kirk Mangus**, assistant professor in the School of Art at Kent State University, throws large (two- to three-feet high) clay jars and bottles on a wheel and decorates them with expressive drawings of male and female human forms, animals, insects, and plants. Designs on the five jar-shaped works are drawn or gouged into the clay, which is then baked in a wood-fired kiln, where ash settling on the jars reacts with the clay to create a subtle natural glaze. The four bottle-shaped pieces, painted with bright, lush, colors, were salt-fired; salt added to the kiln during the firing process reacts with the silica in the clay body to form a glaze. Hinson encourages visitors to study Mangus's ceramics from every angle to appreciate the artist's mastery of the challenging task of drawing on a three-dimensional form.

Richard Myers, professor of art and cinematography at Kent State University, who has been making films in Northeast Ohio since the early 1960s, is the only filmmaker in The Invitational. The films selected for Dreamscapes: The Films of Richard Myers reveal his distinctly non-Hollywood perspective on everyday life, a surrealist vision expressed with technical virtuosity and rare aesthetic integrity. Films will be shown Sundays at 3:30 pm and Wednesdays at 7:30 pm on March 10, 13, 24, and April 3, 7, and 10. Admission to this special series is free. Following the showing of his film, Moving Pictures, on Sunday, March 10, at 3:30 pm, Myers will answer questions from the audience. A separate press release on Myers' films is available.

Ken Nevadomi, associate professor of art at Cleveland State University, paints the human figure in haunting and enigmatic canvases that express his deep feelings and

attitudes about the human condition. In the nine recent works exhibited, he treats of such universal concerns as family, separation, confrontation, and intimacy. His figures vary from canvas to canvas. They may be built up of simple, broad strokes as in *Falling Artist*, blown up out of proportion in *Variation on Myth of Persephone*, or realistically portrayed in *Theater of the Cage of Vision*. He applies his paints with brushes and trowel-like pieces of cardboard, building up complex, tactile surfaces resonant with color.

Paul O'Keeffe, assistant professor in the School of Art at Kent State University, uses solid and perforated, thin and heavy gauge sheets of steel, along with found elements, to create intriguing symmetrically shaped sculptures that are both visually engaging and rich with anatomical, religious, and architectural associations. Two of the eight works in this exhibition, *Heart* and *Desire*, designed to lean against a wall, suggest crosses or human figures with outstretched arms. Three smaller, oval pieces that hang on the wall are ornamental and architectural--like windows in a Gothic cathedral. In some pieces he includes machine-made forms like the metal coat hooks placed around the rim of the circular sculpture, *Well*. He frequently incorporates containers of hardened beeswax in his sculptures, both to reinforce their vessel-like character and as a foil to the strength and rigidity of the metal.

Patricia Zinsmeister Parker's five paintings--four diptychs and one triptych--differ dramatically from her more familiar large-scale, deceptively naive paintings of simple recognizable objects. These new works are basically explorations of form, trying out variations on simple, repeated shapes--cones, crescents, and stripes--all reflecting her keen interest in what happens when a single image or unit is repeated time after time. She painted each canvas separately, then placed them side by side and one on top of the other until she found a coherent whole. While most of her paintings are about formal

issues, some are suggestive of emotions and places. *Euclid Beach* was inspired by the artist's recollections of the amusement park she visited annually as a child. A resident of North Canton, Parker teaches basic design at the University of Akron School of Art.

John Pearson is Young-Hunter Professor of Studio of Art at Oberlin College. For years he has worked in a spare, distinctive manner, using limited colors, uniformly applied, within a geometrically derived composition, in some cases worked out with the help of a computer. Recently he has decided to paint more spontaneously, remaining open to what happens on the canvas. In these new paintings, Pearson intuitively explores the interaction of color and form with simple geometric shapes--rectangles, squares, and parallelograms--and primary colors--red, blue, yellow, black, and white. In four canvases of identical size (84 inches high by 42 inches wide), five narrow rectangles of color run the full height of the canvas, and shorter horizontal rectangles overlay these vertical stripes, the proportions yielding a sense of repose. Two canvases shaped like parallelograms use more complex formats; here horizontal and vertical forms overlay slanting ones, creating a sense of tension and movement.

Annie Peters, an art teacher at Grand Valley High School in Orwell, makes striking, non-functional furniture--beds, chairs, and tables made of tree branches, sticks, bones, barbed wire, rattan, and other materials which she gathers near her home in Middlefield. These provocative works of art--vehicles for expressing her feelings and her concerns about social problems--bear titles like *Crack Crib*, *Aids Bench*, and *Holocaust Cot*. Peters traces the origins of the six works in this show to her interest in baskets; when she first learned to make baskets about fourteen years ago, they were functional, like those of her Amish neighbors. Her baskets became more sculptural and decorative, incorporating materials she now uses in her furniture. As the works became larger and

looser--resembling bramble bushes--they gradually evolved into the furniture on exhibition, some of which is fabricated with basketry techniques.

Hudson resident **La Wilson** has been transforming familiar objects into magical works of art for over twenty years. Largely self-taught, she first experimented with painting, then turned to constructing her extraordinary assemblages of commonplace objects--pencils, buttons, pins, costume jewelry, children's toys, and a mind-boggling array of other items--which she arranges within an appropriate frame, often a box with a history of its own. She says she works intuitively, responding to a particular color, shape, form, or texture, constantly rearranging compositions until they work visually and, more important, touch, her. *Bride Box*, one of thirteen recent works exhibited, suggests a miniature hope chest, with its satin lining, pastel pearl-headed pins, and fake flowers, but tucked among these things is a white plastic snake and a small toy bomb.

An illustrated catalogue with essays on the artists by Tom Hinson is available at the Museum Bookstore for \$17.50 (\$15.00 for Museum members).

The artists will give public talks on their work in the exhibition gallery on Wednesday evenings in March and April, beginning at 6 pm, on the dates listed below:

March 6	Don Harvey and Paul O'Keeffe
March 13	Kirk Mangus and John Pearson
March 20	Michael Loderstedt and Masumi Hayashi
March 27	Kenneth Dingwall, Carl Floyd, and Christina DePaul
April 3	Patricia Zinsmeister Parker and Curlee Raven Holton
	Curator Tom Hinson on the work of Ken Nevadomi
April 10	Annie Peters and La Wilson

Gallery talks by Museum staff are scheduled on Wednesday, March 6; Sunday, March 10; Wednesday, April 17; and Sunday, April 21, beginning at 1:30 pm. A gallery talk for the hearing impaired, in sign language only, will be given on Saturday, March 16, at 10:30 am.

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For additional information, photographs, color slides, please contact Ann Edwards, Public Information, The Cleveland Museum of Art, 11150 East Boulevard, Cleveland OH 44106; 216/421-7340.